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Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Events in Bihac during the next 24 hours would be decisive, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations tells correspondants; says situation is complex, fluid, and requires keen judgment.

+ Secretary-General continues negotiations and telephone consultations with various leaders in efforts to obtain a cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

+ Secretary-General arrives in Algeria for meetings with Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi; will hold working session with President and Foreign Minister tomorrow.

+ General Assembly adopts resolution endorsing the activities of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa.

+ Special Rapporteur on Iraq says recent decrees announcing amputation and branding as punishment for petty thievery show there are no human rights in Iraq; calls it is a barbaric regime.

+ The Legal Committee approves draft resolution by which the General Assembly would consider the deletion of the term "enemy State" from the Charter of the United Nations.

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Events in Bihac during the next 24 hours would be decisive, Kofi Annan, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, told correspondants at Headquarters today. He said that North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) planes were called in to Bihac by United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) to protect United Nations troops after Bosnian Serb forces ended a cease-fire agreement and began shelling the beleaguered town.

Mr. Annan said the planes flew for 60 minutes but initiated no attacks, although several missiles were fired at them with no hits. Both air and ground forces were required to contain the situation and UNPROFOR did not have the forces on the ground to do the job. He stressed that there was a limit to what could be done from the air, without endangering both UNPROFOR troops and

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civilians. The situation was complex, fluid, and required keen judgment, he said.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said he was continuing to negotiate and use every means at his disposal to obtain a cease-fire in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before leaving Italy today, the Secreatry-General had extensive telephone conversations with various leaders regarding the latest developments, according to a United Nations spokesman.

The Secretary-General had consultations with the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and with Bosnian leaders, including President Izetbegovic and Vice-President Ganic. He also consulted with Kofi-Annan, Under-Secretary-General of Peace-Keeping Operations, and with Special Representative Yasushi Akashi and United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) military leaders, General de Lapresle and Lieutenant-General Michael Rose.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali arrived in Algeria today, where he met with Prime Minister Mokdad Sifi and discussed the country's participation in forthcoming United Nations conferences and events during the Organization's fiftieth year. The question of the Western Sahara was also discussed and the Prime Minister expressed his hope that a settlement on the situation there would be reached soon. They also reviewd the situation in Bihac and the Secretary-General briefed the Prime Minister on his contacts with Bosnian leaders and the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Willy Claes. Views were also exchanged on other peace-keeping operations, including those in Rwanda and Somalia.

The Secretary-General later met with the President of the National Transitional Council, Abdelkader Bensalah, who briefed him on the political situation in Algeria. The President said he hoped that an early settlement of the situation in Westen Sahara would be a crowning achievement of the United Nations next year. Tomorrow, the Secretary-General is scheduled to have a working meeting with the Algerian Foreign Minister, Mohamed Salah Dembri, following which he will attend a luncheon in his honour hosted by the President Liamine Zeroual.

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The General Assembly this morning adoped a resolution endorsing the activities of the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa, and appealed to all States institutions and organizations to offer financial and other assistance to the Programme. Acting without a vote, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to make recommendations to its next session on the future role of the Programme, given the changed needs of the country.

Introducing the resolution, the representative of Norway, as Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the Programme, stressed that one of the Programme's

most important features was its cost-effectiveness. It was also essential to note that there had been an increase in the number of awards and the fields of study not traditionally available to the vast majority of South Africans, such as the medical profession, engineering and all types of advanced sciences. The representative of South Africa said his Government was particularly anxious to see that the Programme continue its activities during the period of fundamental socio-economic transition of his country.

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The slightest sign of disagreement with the Iraqi Government could lead to torture, imprisonment and even loss of life, the Special Rapporteur on Iraq, Max van der Stoel said today. Briefing correspondents at Headquarters, on the human rights situation in that country, he said recent decrees announcing amputation and branding as punishment for petty thievery, showed that there were no human rights in Iraq and that it was a barbaric regime. He described as outright terrorism three suspicious deaths.

Also today, Mr. Van der Stoel presented his report to the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee). He called for the United Nations to deploy human rights monitors in Iraq, so that oppressive government agents would know that rights violations would be reported and to give hope to Iraqis who faced constant violations and repression. The Iraqi Government had still not provided concrete information on more than 600 Kuwaitis who disappeared after the Gulf War and an exodus of people from the southern marshes continued, which were being drained of water to facilitate military operations. The report addressed such issues as missing Kuwaiti citizens, alarming conditions among the Marsh Arabs, legal applications of cruel and unusual punishment, political killings and the rights to food and health.

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The Sixth Committee (Legal) voted today to approve a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would consider the deletion of the term "enemy State" from the Charter of the United Nations. The Committee took that action in approving a draft resolution on the report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea told the Committee his Government did not believe that the articles mentioned in the "enemy State" clauses had become obsolete. Japan, which belonged to the enemy States, had neither repudiated past wrongdoings nor made a political commitment that it would never repeat those wrongdoings. Replying, Japan said it had many times expressed its remorse for the sufferings caused during the second world war and declared its commitment to see that it was never repeated.

In other action this morning, the Committee approved without a vote a draft decision by which the Assembly's granting of observer status would be confined to States and those intergovernmental organizations whose activities covered matters of interest to it.

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